

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

RELATED POLICIES

- Staff code of conduct
- Safeguarding Policy
- Record Keeping Policy
- Data Protection policy and Data management procedures
- Email and other communication policies

BACKGROUND

The nature of being involved with the School is such that employees, volunteers and Council members will often have access to information, including:

- personal information relating to pupils, their parents and families, staff, prospective employees or pupils, former employees or pupils and others connected to the School,
- financial or business information relating to the above or to the School.

Any unauthorised or inappropriate disclosure may be highly prejudicial to the School, its pupils, staff or parents and may also damage the reputation of the School or destroy the trust we are given. It is essential that **all** staff understand and appreciate the need to maintain this confidentiality at all times.

PURPOSE:

- To give clear guidance to all those working within the School, whether paid or voluntary, on issues around confidentiality.
- To enable young people to be able to talk to a trusted adult when they feel the need
- To ensure the welfare needs of staff are met
- To safeguard personal and sensitive information

KEY POINTS:

- All adults involved in the School should at all times maintain an attitude of care, respect and confidentiality towards information they receive relating to children, young people, staff, parents, families and prospective employees and towards the School's internal affairs.
- Pupils need to be reassured that their best interests will be maintained.
- Pupils need to know that staff are not able to offer unconditional confidentiality, but that if confidentiality has to be broken they will be informed first and supported accordingly.
- Any personal information should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately
- If a staff member or volunteer receives any information that leads them to believe that there is a possibility of a child protection issue, the matter should be referred to the Lead Safeguarding Officer and the Safeguarding Policy must be followed. If in doubt discussion with the Safeguarding Lead is vital.

Any breach of these principles may be considered gross misconduct. Given the local and small nature of the school community it is incumbent upon **all** staff to maintain this awareness, including in their own homes, among friends and in school to make sure conversations are neither inappropriate nor overheard. Similarly absolute care must be taken that paperwork is not left in areas readily accessible to a range of people.

Areas needing particular awareness

The list below contains examples and is not exhaustive.

Council, College, Child Study, Staff and Teachers' Meetings:

- College, Council, Teachers' Meetings and Child Study work is confidential.
- Some issues relating to children will need the awareness of others and should be shared in line with the above guidelines on a need to know basis.
- Child Study is confidential and thoughts arising from it should be treated with respect and care.
- Parents must be informed if their child is to be the focus of a study.
- College or Council members should not divulge details about individuals (staff, families, children or prospective employees) to any person outside of the meeting unless clearly authorised to do so or to a professional with a direct involvement in the individual.
- Staff should not discuss an individual child with or in the presence of another child, or with another parent or share documents that have matters relating to another child in them.

Child and Staff Health and Welfare Issues

- Sometimes health or welfare issues may need a general awareness, such as anaphylaxis, epilepsy, heart conditions, depression. In drawing up protocols or procedures to maintain the health and welfare of the individual, the balance between confidentiality and knowledge sharing should be carefully clarified.

Employment and Volunteers

- Applications for employment and the selection process are confidential. Employment decisions will be disseminated in a manner and time-frame determined by College (or appropriate group) and not before.
- Parents, teachers and volunteers should not report cases of poor behaviour, pupil discipline or learning issues to other parents or pupils either within or outside of the School other than for professional reasons as outlined above.

Records

- Pupil Files and Pupil Reports are NEVER to be taken off site.
- Parent contract files are never to be taken off site.
- School meeting minute records such as College, Council, Finance, etc are never to be taken off site other than with the express consent of the relevant Chair.
- Agenda, minutes and related documents that are off site, including documents sent to Council members, are to be kept in a secure place and shredded or returned to School for shredding, when no longer needed.
- Photos and videos/film of pupils must be maintained in light of the photography and media policy and data protection.

Working at Home

- Staff members, volunteers and Council members working at home are asked to minimise absolutely the paperwork they take home, and follow the above and the data protection and handling policies.
- Staff, volunteers and Council members are reminded to take care to ensure that paperwork or conversations on pupil or school matters are not available to or overheard by others not appropriate to the content or outside the School premises and that proper data protection procedures are maintained.

The School data protection policy and procedures for managing data state clearly that all sensitive data must be handled with due care and only relevant data will be stored or shared. For further information please see the policies and procedures or contact the Bursar.

Policy last reviewed August 2016

Lesley Taberer, Bursar